(c) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to abolish Access Deficit Charge (ADC); and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) A proposal has been received to include all wireless services under USO Fund and the same is under consideration.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

**Rural teledensity *Vis-a-Vis* Urban Areas**

4518. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICAITONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether ti is a fact that Government have decided to accelerate connectivity by setting a target of 15 crore fresh connectivity in the next three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the digital divide was yet to be bridged as the teledensity in villages was 1.7 percent compared to 27 per cent in urban areas; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The targets of Additional phones for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) for the next three years are given as below:

(in millions)

| Sl. No. | ITEM | TARGET | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | BSNL | MTNL |
| 1 | 2005-2006 (Fixed, WLL, Mobile) | 24.70 | 1.00 |
| 2 | 2006-2007 (Fixed, WLL, Mobile) | 27.44 | 2.00 |
| 3 | 2007-2008 (Fixed, WLL, Mobile) (up to December, 2007) | 24.50 | 1.75 |
| | Total | 76.64 | 4.75 |

It is expected that remaining telephones will be provided by private operators.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Following steps have been taken to provide more telephone connections in the rural areas, which are expected to help in bridging the digital divide;

(i) Large scale deployment of WLL network in rural areas has been planned.

(ii) Relaxation of the outdoor cable from 2.5 kms to 5.0 kms for landline Exchanges has been given.

(iii) Mobile network in all the highways, important towns, pilgrim centers and State Highways are deployed to give coverage to more areas.

(iv) Further, financial support is provided to the telecome operators through the mechanism of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USO Fund) to encourage them, *inter alia,* to provide phones in rural areas.

**Share of MTNL/BSNL**

†4519. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the share of MTNL and BSNL in the revenue earned through PCO installed throughout the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of PCOs of MTNL and BSNL have been closed during the last years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor along with the loss likely to be suffered by both public sector companies out of their closure; and

(d) the details of the efforts being made by Government to contain the said loss?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.